

THE “*CONDER*” TOKEN

COLLECTOR'S JOURNAL

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONDER TOKEN COLLECTOR'S CLUB

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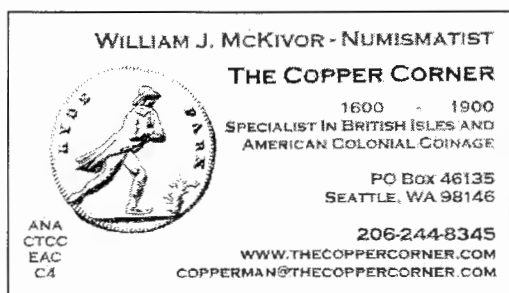
MIDDLESEX 80

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Bill McKivor and “M. Boulton, Esquire”

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INTRODUCTION

MICHAEL GROGAN

CTCC ELECTION 2007

Since all candidates for election were unopposed there is no need for a ballot and member voting. Club officers for the next two year term will be:

President – Gregg Moore
Vice President U.S. – Harold Welch
Vice President Intn'l – Alan Judd
Treasurer – Scott Loos

Congratulations and thanks to those willing to serve the club in these volunteer positions. John Fisher and I will continue in our appointed positions of Publisher and Editor.

ARTICLES NEEDED

Original articles by our members are the heart of our Journal. You need not be a token “expert” to contribute an interesting and worthwhile article. Consider making a contribution to the next issue. I will be glad to help any member get started or put the final polish on an article. Note that any member contributing a major article will receive a special color cover of that issue as our thanks.

SHOULD WE EXPAND OUR CLUB’S AREA OF INTEREST?

Excellent articles in this issue concerning seventeenth and nineteenth century tokens are the result of including these related token series in the Journal. Look for them and enjoy!

ISSUE 44 CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

Bill McKivor requests a caption correction to his “bis” article: “The Charlotte/Frogmore piece is in the correct position, but the caption that belonged under it is under the last piece, Charlotte/Alter and snake. And, therefore, the one under the Frogmore token belonged under the last one on the page, the Alter piece.”

John Fisher points out a footnote error in his “Blything Hundred” article: “There is an error in my footnotes of that article that maybe should be corrected in the next issue - 17Bis II - should have read reverse instead of obverse.”

For those with a special interest in the Blything Hundred, a portrait of Cavalry

Commander John Rous can be viewed here:

<http://www.npg.org.uk:80/live/search/portrait.asp?LinkID=mp65789&rNo=0&role=sit>

ON THE COVER

The image of Justice on Middlesex 80 and the other “British Penny Token” pieces are considered by many to be among the most handsome designs in the Conder series. This token features infamous Newgate on the reverse. Thanks to Gary Groll for providing the cover photo.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY COPPER TOKENS OF SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX¹

by Tony Fox

Saffron Walden is an ancient town in north-west Essex. It stands on a large outcropping of chalk, and commands the 'highlands' of this otherwise lowland county, at the unimpressive (by American standards) elevation of about 75 m (235 ft) above sea level. Originally, the place was known simply as Walden. However, after about 1445, the cultivation of the autumn-flowering crocus (*C. sativa*) seems to have become an international specialty in the town, and it thus gained the epithet 'Saffron'. This industry died out in the late 19th century, as a result of an early example of outsourcing and cheap imports; to this day most saffron is sourced from Iran due to lower labour costs.

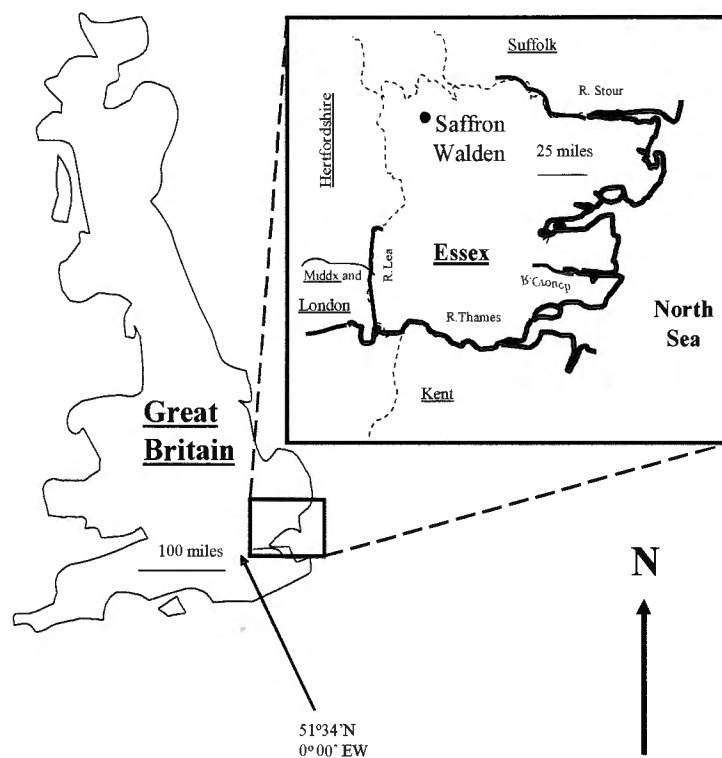


Figure 1. Saffron Walden, Essex.

Interest in the tokens of Saffron Walden is not new. The town's Museum has collected them for a long time, and a manuscript catalogue of its collection was in the possession of one Mr. Guy Maynard before the First World War. Even before that, Williamson's national survey of seventeenth century tokens (published 1889) acknowledged help with the Saffron Walden issues from Joseph Clarke FSA, a resident of the Town.³ Then, in 1914, Gilbert included Saffron Walden's tokens in his general survey of the Essex 17th century issues.

In those days, the law insisted that all legal cash transactions should be with regal coinage of gold and silver. This created huge problems for the common person doing small transactions. How does one buy or sell a loaf, when the smallest regal coin is a silver penny (twelve of which made a labourer's day wage, and nine of which would feed a whole family for a day) ? The existence of these tokens indicates the indifference of the then Government to the practical difficulties of life amongst the lower-classes, in much the same way as a little more than a century later, when Conders themselves appeared. But such problems did not occupy the minds of those who bought flour by the hundred-weight and had live-in servants to do the baking.

The general public had been massively cheated before. In 1613, Lord Harrington had been given a patent for copper farthings which he issued from Token House Yard (just off Lothbury, near the Guildhall in London). Magistrates were asked to encourage their use, as did King Charles I upon his accession. Gold and silver coins thus migrated to London, and Essex and the Home Counties were flooded with the copper tokens. Then, predictably, the patentees refused to redeem their farthings, and the lower classes were left with nothing but copper coins whose intrinsic value was much less than the face value. Many poor people were ruined and not a few riots resulted.⁴ But even with King Charles I gone, Commonwealth ministers still failed to provide any small denomination, copper coinage with national backing.

All the Saffron Walden issues are round and in soft copper; two are halfpennies and the rest are farthings. These issues are dated between 1653 – 1668, thus being issued both before and after the restoration of King Charles II in 1660.² The invention of copper tokens issued by local traders, rather than national patentees, introduced a measure of local reputation, and personal knowledge, into transactions where copper halfpenny and farthing tokens were used as small change. Some towns in Essex (but not Saffron Walden) even went to the extreme of adding legends to their farthings such as "For the use of ye poor", accordingly. These little, soft, copper farthings stood duty until the official copper coinage of King Charles II eventually appeared in 1672.

The Table provides a list of the Saffron Walden traders that issued these 17th century tokens. The Table collates the various type numbers from all the sources in the Bibliography.

Little is known about how these 17th century tokens were manufactured. Williamson thought that there were itinerant salesmen for the mintage, who might also make the

designs, and negotiate with the prospective issuer. The mints were probably in London. Presumably the economics were similar to that for Conders at the end of the following century. The manufacturer's profit came from the difference between the face value of the tokens sold to the issuer, minus a discount. This meant that the issue had to have a higher face value than the intrinsic value of the copper from which it was made. The costs of striking and transportation were then factored in. Payment for bulk new copper tokens would be demanded in regal silver and gold coinage.

At Saffron Walden there is evidence of economy in the process of token design; some reverse designs are re-used. For example, John Potter and Anne Matthews shared a reverse design (see Table). The coat of arms of the Mercers' livery company appears on one Saffron Walden issue and five others elsewhere in Essex. Two of the thirty Essex issues bearing the arms of the Grocers' Company are from Saffron Walden. Reverses depicting clay pipes and fish(es) are also widely found, not only Saffron Walden.

Interest in local 17th century token issues can often be for reasons historical rather than numismatical; after all, this is hardly the glamorous end of numismatics.⁵ Unlike many of the Conders, which were often made for collectors, these 17th century copper tokens were intended for circulation. Honouring their copper tokens could only have contributed to these tradesmens' reputations as business(wo)men. Furthermore, in Saffron Walden, these issuers were not only well-known to the local population, but also many undertook prominent civic offices in the Town. Could those seeking high office in Saffron Walden in the seventeenth century have found that issuing and honouring these tokens was good politically ?⁶ This is the sort of wider interest, even among non-numismatists, in these tokens. They provide insight into mid-seventeenth century life and the real people that lived back then.

We can also glimpse what these real people thought about these tokens. One needs only look at the worn state of the surviving Saffron Walden tokens for them to witness the degree of trust that must have existed between those that issued them and those that accepted them. This was in spite of that earlier experience with duff, Token House Yard farthings, and within living memory. Moreover, unlike for some Lord in distant London, ducking the responsibility to redeem her tokens might carry serious personal consequences for Ann Mathews in Walden: This was an era that was without a police force.

At first, it seems surprising, a century or so later. After all, this is a town which compares well with many others in Essex for its size, commerce, and population of tradesmen. But Saffron Walden was one of 98 towns across Essex that issued tokens during the 17th century, and with the Conders, we know of only ten places doing the same (excluding the spurious issue assigned to Leigh by Dalton and Hamer).⁷ Thus, Saffron Walden is just one example out of 70 or 80 other places in Essex where the need for tokens specifically issued in the same town was lost by the 1790s. Presumably, in some way, a heavier 18th century Conder halfpenny circulating in Essex did not need some very local tradesmen's reputation to back it, as had been the case more than a century before. And we should



A stereotypical reverse
J276a
W281, G323
W283, G325

W273 G134
W275 G316
W279, G321
Actual diameters
about 19 mm.

Saffron Walden copper tokens c.1650 - 1680.

Courtesy, Saffron Walden Museum.

also remember that Saffron Walden is in the extreme northwest of Essex. Doubtless, this created two influences. Walden was an Essex town, and looked to Chelmsford as its county town. But, geographically, Cambridge is nearby, too, and county boundaries were more political than commercial. The fact that Saffron Walden was in the ambit of two areas of Conder production, and that Conders were probably acceptable more widely, in the geographical sense, than their 17th century predecessors, might be the explanation why the Walden tradespeople needed no Conders of their own. A study of how and why 98 token-issuing towns in 17th century Essex should have collapsed down to just ten places a century later is probably worth separate study. Such a study could begin by investigating whether a similar phenomenon took place in other counties.

In summary, the copper coins of Saffron Walden were minted at a time when many Essex towns and parishes were doing so, and in response to a lack of regal coinage suitable for small transactions. These tokens were issued by well-known Saffron Walden tradesmen, many of whom occupied high office in the Town. The well-worn state of surviving specimens show that they were accepted by the population, honoured by their issuers, and may even have been a form of publicity. These 17th century issues allows us to add a new town to the Essex *corpus* of token production reported in *CTCJ*.

And if you go to Saffron Walden, then be sure to stop in the Crossed Keys, a timber pub in the centre of town. The beer and food is good, and the big bressumer fireplace is welcoming on a cold and wet day. You will be in the building that Cromwell used as his HQ in Essex, just a few years before these 17th century issues were minted. The tokens of Nathaniel Cattlin, Richard Kentish, the Leaders, Anne Mathews, Thomas Mehew, Thomas Palmer, John Potter, the Thompsons, and William Wildman must certainly have crossed that same bar. That, too, is where those fishes were eaten, and clay pipes smoked, even if the situation improved on July 1, 2007.⁸

FOOTNOTES

1. The author is grateful to Jacqueline Cooper, Editor, *Saffron Walden Historical Journal (SWHJ)* for permission to re-use much from a similar article: see Fox T. The Tokens of Saffron Walden: A Commentary. *SWHJ* 2006; **6 (11)**: 17-20. The Saffron Walden Museum is again acknowledged for allowing the author to photograph the 17th century tokens in its possession. For more of the history of saffron cultivation in Essex, see: Christy M. *Saffron culture*. In: Page W, Round JH (Eds) *The Victoria County History of the County of Essex*. London, 1907; Vol. 2, pp. 359-365.
2. Excluding oddities (e.g., the coinages of besieged towns during the Civil War), the five general phases of local English coinages are pre-Roman, Roman, Anglo-saxon, 12th-14th century Plantagenet, and the 17th-19th century tokens. Colchester (Camulodunum) appears to be the only town in England represented in all five (its claim to the Roman phase can be argued from the early Claudian series, if not those of Allectus and Carausius, whose 'C' mint might have been elsewhere). In addition, there was an

Elizabethan copper farthing that was legal tender within 10 miles of Bristol, and some other Tudor tokens on lead or leather used by individual traders which did not, apparently, circulate widely. Tangentially, while it is true that the English are probably the only nation that celebrate the failure of a revolution, the anniversary on November 5th (“Guy Fawkes night”) refers to events in 1605, and not the restoration of Charles II in 1660 (the puritan interregnum having begun with the execution of King Charles I in 1649).

3. Joseph Clarke FSA was diocesan architect at the time (www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/places/apsley.htm). He is probably the same Joseph Clarke that was town councillor, mayor, and brother of Joshua Clarke, a Saffron Walden maltster (www.townlib.org.uk/ex-founding.htm). Interestingly, there is a stray reference attributed to Miller Christy (1890) that Joseph Clarke had been the taxidermist of an elephant exhibited at the Great Exhibition, Crystal Palace in 1851, and belonging to the Saffron Walden Museum until 1960 (www.twohootstaxidermy.co.uk/archive.htm). (Websites accessed June 19, 2005).
4. The story is told in the opening to Gilbert’s series of articles. It is interesting to consider that today’s regal circulating coinage is, in fact, entirely token: Its intrinsic value is less than its denominations, and this is why British 5p and 10p pieces have had to be reduced in size during recent decades. For American readers, the “Home Counties” is a loosely defined, but commonly-used, term referring to counties bordering on London. Essex, Kent, Surrey, and Middlesex do so directly. By the 19th century, the term was somewhat extended to include Buckinghamshire, if only because the London Underground railway (the “Tube”) extends into that county. Their proximity and dormitory suburbs would today probably also qualify Hertfordshire and even Berkshire (whose easternmost corner is less than 10 miles from Richmond).
5. Indeed, if this was India, and if the collectors of gold type sets were the Brahmin, then the Conder collectors would be the middle classes, and those of us interested in these worn copper tokens are probably the untouchables ! The former absence of any venue to get articles on these local issues published is yet further evidence of this classism (with all due credit to the Editor’s new policy).
6. High office was not a universal ambition, judging by the numbers of men who paid fines in order to refuse office.
7. Fox AW. The Essex D&H no.42: The church belies it. *Conder Token Coll J* 2005; **10 (1):** 14-18
8. The author thinks the new smoking restrictions in England, more or less the same as in California, will make interesting pubs far more pleasant for reasons both aesthetic and medical !

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- Dickinson M. Seventeenth century tokens of the British Isles and their values. London: Spink; 1986; pp.59-60.
- Fox AW. The Essex D&H no.42 (Leigh): The church belies it. *Conder Tokens Coll J* 2005; **10 (no.35)**: 14-18.
- Gilbert W. The token coinage of Essex in the seventeenth century. *Trans Essex Arch & Hist* (1914) **13**: 184-199, 267-280; (1916) **14**: 1-15, 146-157, 256; and (1925) **17**: 244-256.
- Judson E. The lives and wills of Essex token issuers, incorporating a re-listing of the seventeenth century trade tokens of Essex. Little Bardfield, Essex: 1987; pp.160-166.
- Williamson GC. Trade tokens issued in the seventeenth century. London: Seaby 1889-1891, reprinted 1967; **1**: 229-231. [A revision of an earlier book by W.Boyne].
-

SOME ADDITIONAL SOURCES FOR 17th and 18th CENTURY TOKENS

At the Editor's request, here are some further sources on 17th and 18th century tokens:

- *Akerman JY. *Tradesmen's Tokens Current in London and its Vicinity between the years 1648 and 1672*. London: John Russell Smith, 1849.
- *Beaufoy HBH and Burn JH. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the London Traders, Tavern, and Coffee-house Tokens current in the 17th century*. London: Corporation of the City of London, Second edition, 1855.
- *Boyne W. *Tokens issued in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries in Yorkshire*. Headingley: Privately Printed by the Author, 1858.
- *Clay C (Ed) *Currency of the Isle of Man*. Douglas: The Manx Society, 1869, no.XVII.
- Longman W. *Tokens of the Eighteenth Century*. London: Longmans, Green, 1916.

N.B.:- Those marked * can be downloaded as .pdf files, without charge or copyright violation, from <http://google/books/tokens> (also taught to me by the Editor !).

Tony Fox

Table. Saffron Walden traders' tokens c. 1650-1675. Abbreviations:- W-Williamson; G-Gilbert; D-Dickinson; J-Judson (unless stated, same numbers as Williamson); L-legend only (all the reverses carry the name of the town, variously spelt); SWM:- Saffron Walden Museum. The spellings used are those on the tokens themselves. See next page for footnotes.

Name	Trade	Date	Obverse Design	Reverse Design	Reference nos.
Nathaniell Cattlin	?Weaver	1668	A shuttle	L	W271, G312
Richard Kentish ¹	?Mercer	Unknown	The Mercers Arms	L	W272, G313
Richard Kentish ¹	Inn-keeper	Unknown	Head of a black boy	L	W273, G314
Samvell Leader ^{2,3}	Unknown	1653	Two tobacco pipes	L	W274, G315
William Leader ²	Unknown	1668	Two pipes, crossed	L	W275, G316
Ann Mathews ⁴	Grocer	1656	The Grocers' Arms	L ⁷	W276, G317
Ann Mathews ⁴	Grocer	1656	The Grocers' Arms	L ⁷ variant in SWM	W-, G-, J276a
Thomas Mehew ²	Grocer	1658	The Grocers' Arms	L, "Safforn.Walldin"	W277, G318
Thomas Mehew ²	Grocer	1658	The Grocers' Arms	L, "Waldon"	W-, G318**, J277a
Thomas Palmer ^{2,6}	Draper	Unknown	L	The Drapers' arms	W -, G319, J277b
Thomas Patmer ^{2,6}	Draper	Unknown	L	The Drapers' arms	W278, G320

Contd.

Table (contd.). Saffron Walden traders' tokens c. 1650-1675 (contd.). See previous page for abbreviations.

John Potter	Inn-keeper & Grocer	1656	A hart couchant	L ⁷	W279, G321
Edward Tompson ⁸	Unknown	1659 (W has 1655, probably an error; J has 1659)	L	L	W280, G322
Edward K Tompson ⁸	Unknown	1659	L	L	W281, G323
William Wildman ⁹	Unknown	1656	Two fishes	L	W282, G324
William Wildman ^{2, 10}	Unknown	1667	Two fishes	L	W283, G325

¹It is unknown if these are the same person. ²Sometime Borough treasurer. ³?Sometime Mayor.

⁴Formerly schoolmaster's widow, whose second husband was John Potter (see W279, G321).

⁶Doubtless the same person. ⁷Identical reverses with the initials AM.

⁸These both have the initials EKT on the reverse. ⁹Sometime Chamberlain.

¹⁰Son of immediately previous.

**Reported with the same number in Gilbert's addendum of 1925.

DAVID ALVES REBELLO: A JEW OF HACKNEY

Melvyn H. Brooks

Jews in Hackney

1996 marked not only the Centenary of Hackney Synagogue but also the 200th *yahrzeit* (death anniversary) of David Alves Rebello (1741-1796), one of Hackney's most fascinating Jewish residents. To understand a little of the life and times of Rebello it is important to place him in the context of his surroundings, his neighbours and history.

The closing years of the eighteenth century were ones of social unrest. Constitutional reform was being demanded. The French Revolution and its aftermath caused fear in English society that a similar upheaval would happen in Great Britain. The established Church was being challenged by dissenters and the Industrial Revolution was changing the face of England.

At this time Hackney was still a country village on the outskirts of London. It was not until about 1840, with the advent of cheap railway travel, that the area lost its status as a retreat for the rich many of whom had country estates there. The development of Hackney was taking place at a number of settlements along existing roads, in the centre, with the parish church of St. John-at-Hackney and groups of houses at Shacklewell, Homerton, Upper and Lower Clapton, Stamford Hill, and Dalston.¹

The earliest record of Jews in Hackney² after the Resettlement was that of the family of Isaac Alvares, a jeweller who bought a modest home in Homerton in 1678. The first synagogue was probably in the home of Jacob

Franco, a gem merchant who, in 1744, bought Clapton House facing the pond in Lower Clapton. Amongst the Jews who chose to live in Hackney were the Rothschilds in Stamford Hill, the Montefiores in Kingsland Road and later Stamford Hill, and the Aguilar family at the Triangle, Mare Street and Clapton Square.

Part of the area south of the junction of Well Street and Mare Street was built up from about 1690 by Thomas Tryon.³ Tryon's Place is roughly the line of Tudor Road from Mare Street to Tudor Grove.⁴ It consisted of large houses with ornamental gardens. The Rebello family home at Clifton House occupied about eight acres⁵ on the north corner of Mare Street and Tudor Road. It shared a carriageway with the adjoining house - The Elms - and, like many large houses, gradually lost its grounds to terraced houses and its carriageway to the widening of Mare Street. Clifton House was demolished between the two World Wars. Ede House, the police section house, is built on part of the site.

The earliest reference found to the Rebello family in Hackney is in 1750 (Isaac Duwart Rebello - father-in-law of David Alves Rebello, also known as Isaac Duarte Rebello Da Mendoza).⁶ The family probably rented Clifton House for many years, with David Rebello finally buying the copyhold from Thomas Cotton only months before he died there in 1796.⁷ Isaac Rebello was nominated an overseer of the poor for 1752, a headborough (petty constable) in 1755, a constable 1760 and collec-

tor of the lamp rate for 1773. David Alvez (sic) Rebello was elected a headborough in 1790.⁸ These communal functions were the duty of all ratepayers and many would pay a fine or appoint a proxy in their place. Moses Montefiore and Nathan Mayer Rothschild were later appointed to similar positions.

David Alvez and family

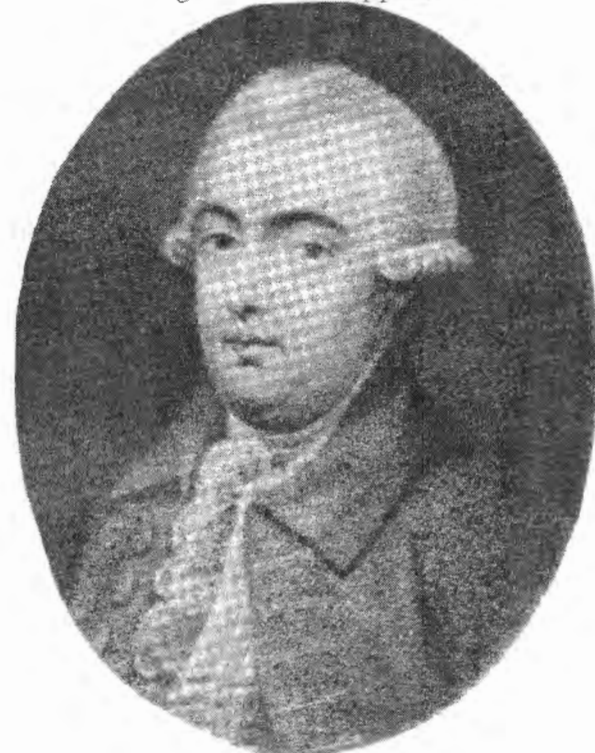
At the age of 18 Rebello married his first cousin, Sara de Isaac Rebello da Mendoza, two days before Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, 5520 (corresponding to Wednesday, 3 October 1759) at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Bevis Marks. There were four children. The first daughter, Sarah, died in infancy in 1760. A son, Isaac Alvez, died in 1803, as did the second daughter, also called Sarah. Rachel died in 1806 and Ester in 1812. Rebello showed great concern for his second daughter Sarah, who must have been unable to care for herself. Several times in his will he requests that his three other children take care of her and ensure her welfare. She may have had some kind of mental or physical handicap.

Rebello was an active member of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.⁹ He can easily be visualised setting out from Clifton House, crossing Mare Street into Exmouth Place (now Helmsley Street) and meeting the pathway from Mare Street that crossed London Fields to the Broadway and then on to the City by way of Shoreditch Church. At this time this area of South Hackney (sometimes called the Cat and Mutton Fields, after the public house on the corner of the Broadway Market, and later London Fields) was often the site of attacks by robbers and highwaymen.¹⁰

Rebello may sometimes have been accompanied by a servant or two for protection on his weekly walk to the City for Shabbat morning services. He served as Treasurer of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in 1773 and Warden in the years 1777, 1782, 1786 and 1790.¹¹ Rebello also had an address in the City at 25 St Mary Axe, and it could well have been that he stayed there for the Sabbath when the weather was bad. The synagogue must have played an important part in the life of Rebello. Substantial bequests were left by him to the Wardens and Treasurer of the 'Portuguese Synagogue', including money to be distributed to the poor on the day of his burial, one week later, on the thirtieth day, and on the expiration of the eleventh month after his burial. In addition he left an investment of five hundred pounds sterling, the dividends of which were to be used to purchase, for twelve poor

men and twelve poor women of the Sephardi congregation, underwear, stockings and shoes on 1st November each year. The money still exists and in 1970 was amalgamated into the Welfare Board Benefit Fund of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation. It is perhaps difficult today to realise the value of five hundred pounds in 1796 but a clergyman with a living of three hundred and fifty pounds per annum accompanied by a house and fruit and vegetable garden could live quite comfortably, allowing him a servant or two plus a horse.

Rebello is described as a merchant of the City of London. I have been able to find little about his business life. He did inherit money and property from his father and other kinsmen. He was an amateur geologist and supporter of the arts.¹² His name appears as a subscriber to Milton's *Views of Ireland* in 1783 and to *A Course of Physico-Theological Lectures upon the State of the World* by Robert Miln, 1786. Rebello is listed posthumously (1798) as a subscriber to *A New Merchant's Guide; containing a concise System of Information for the Port and City of London: together with Some Observations particularly useful to Commercial Men and Their Clerks*, compiled and digested by I. Sequeira. At this time subscription lists were often used as a form of advertisement. There were several annual guides to the City of which Rebello took advantage. His name appears in *Kent's*



David Alvez Rebello

Directory from 1769 to 1783 with his address as Mare Street, Hackney and the Rainbow Coffee House at 34 Cornhill. The same entry appears in Baldwin's *New Complete Guide* (1770), Sketchley's *Sheffield Directory* (1774) and the *Complete Pocket Book* (1776 and 1779). The *New Complete Guide* (listings 1772, 1774, 1777 and 1783) gives the same two addresses but in 1779, 25 St Mary Axe replaced the Rainbow Coffee House. A similar change of his City address occurred in the London Directory. For the years 1770, 1777, 1781 the address is Mare Street, Hackney and the Rainbow Coffee House but in 1795 it is 7 Bevis Marks, St Mary Axe. In all the directories except one his occupation is given as merchant/commerce. However in the *Complete Pocket Book* for 1776 it is listed as hop merchant, food/drink(s). This is the only clue that has been found as to his livelihood. Isaac Alves Rebello Esq, Hackney, FAS (the son of David Alves) appears in the list of subscribers to Malton's *Picturesque Tour thro' London and Westminster* in 1792-1801.

Rebello and Priestley

In 1788 Rebello met with Joseph Priestley, the famed discoverer of oxygen and a prominent dissenting Christian theologian.¹³ He was an early Zionist¹⁴ and wrote that he believed 'the true aera of the renovation of the world would not come about until the Jews were returned to their ancient home in Palestine'.¹⁵ Priestley's home in Birmingham was burned down by a rioting mob in 1791 and he then fled and came to live in Hackney (opposite the site of the Round Chapel in Lower Clapton Road) until 1794, when he emigrated to Philadelphia. In a letter dated 13 May 1788,¹⁶ Priestley and Lindsey described the following meeting.

We had our conference at Hackney...but met only one of the Jewish nation, but he alone was being a person of sense and reflection, well informed concerning his own religion, what it was that it consisted, and willing to give up a great deal and come nearer to christians (sic) such as we were than almost any other perhaps besides he himself.

Rebello appears to have adhered to his belief in Judaism, as the letter continues 'After a long discussion, he seemed to think and said he did not see what he would gain by becoming a christian'. Priestley continues that the Jews were uninterested in converting Gentiles to their faith and they were indifferent to 'further inquiry after the gospel'. He continues that Mr Rebello was against reformation of Judaism lest 'people should run away with the notion that all was wrong and desert Judaism'.

The closing sentences give a clue to Rebello's roots:

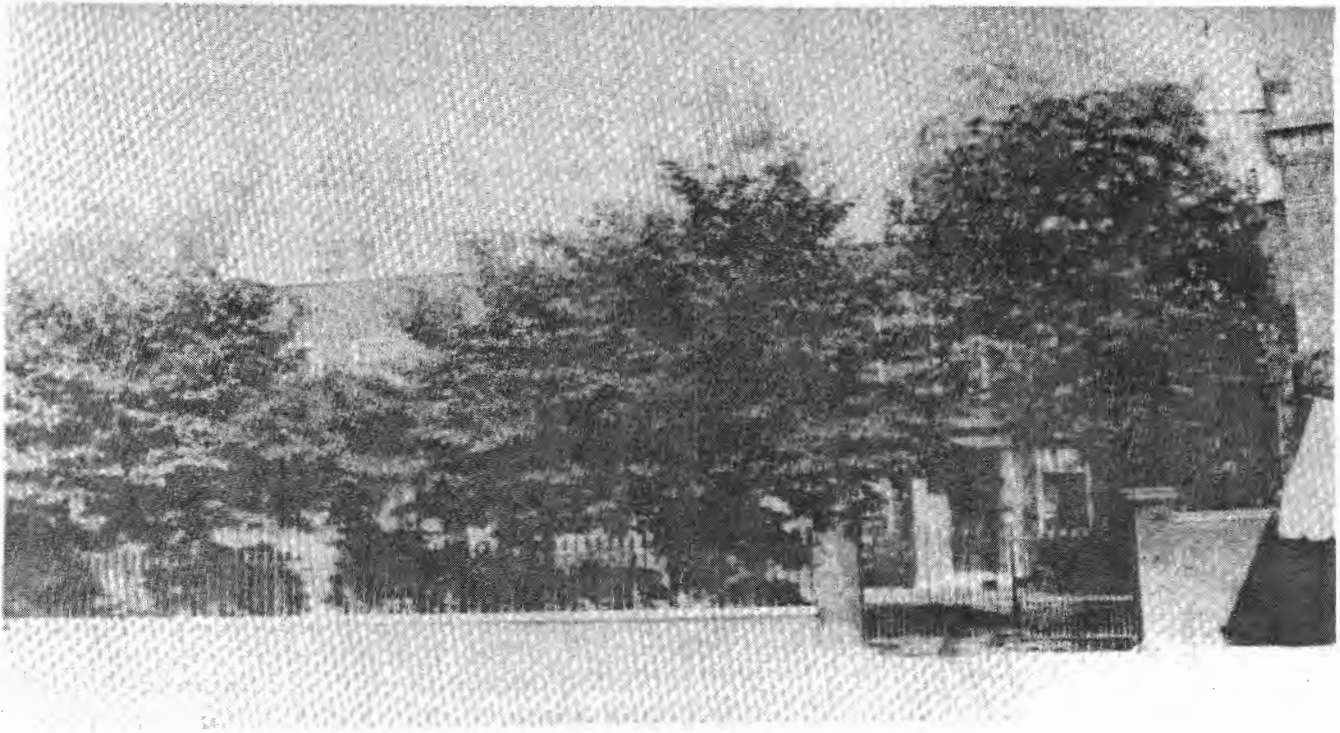
This gentleman's father was in the Inquisition. He has many such relatives in Portugal who pass for being old christians. He himself was bred up there as a christian.

It appears therefore that Rebello was born in Portugal to a Marrano family who, after arriving in England, returned to the open practice of Judaism.

Rebello the coin collector

It is generally accepted that David Alves Rebello issued the first private token in England, although there is some doubt about this, and Bell claims that the honour might go to Seward's Lancaster Token of 1794.¹⁷ Rebello's name is associated with two pieces from 1795 and 1796, both now rarities. Robinson the topographer and local historian of North-East London is the first printed source found about Rebello and his tokens. He gives brief descriptions and illustrations of the 1795 Hackney promissory (halfpenny) token and the 1796 medal. Although this latter piece is regarded as a commemorative token Rebello is likely to have seen and approved its design. Bearing in mind the description of his physical state before his death¹⁸ it is probable that Rebello realised that he was nearing his death and he was the instigator of the medal and saw it as his memorial. This would be in character: a number of requests in his will point to a desire that his memory be kept alive.

Robinson illustrates a third token from this period, the Sheffield Constitutional Society (SCS) one penny token which shows on its obverse side old Hackney Church. On first glance this illustration and that on the 1795 Rebello halfpenny are the same. On closer examination there are several differences. The time on the clock of the Rebello token is 4.09 and 7.00 on the SCS; in the exergue MDCCXC (1790) Rebello, MCCXC (1290) the SCS; the coat of arms is narrower, the tower has no brickwork and the weather vane altered in the SCS coin, and the initials 'JM' do not appear on the SCS coin. It could well be that this SCS coin is a mixture (called a 'mule' by collectors) of an adapted obverse side of the 1795 Rebello coin with a new reverse side. In 1995 a reputable coin dealer advertised a 'David Alves Rebello 1795 halfpenny Conder token' (which was purchased by the author of this essay) that on close inspection shows an obverse side identical to that of the SCS coin with the same Latin date in the exergue. The reverse side is an



Clifton House (right) and 'the Elms', Mare Street, photographed by George James about 1870

imitation of that of the 1795 Rebello halfpenny. The laurel wreath is not as ornate, the letters DAR are less flowery and the palm branch and scuppet different. This was probably one of the forgeries produced about 1796 by Skidmore and sold to unsuspecting collectors often at inflated prices. Skidmore employed Jacobs, a die sinker of inferior ability to John Milton, the Royal Mint engraver who had produced the original coins. The fame of the two Rebello coins made it worthwhile to produce forgeries!¹⁹

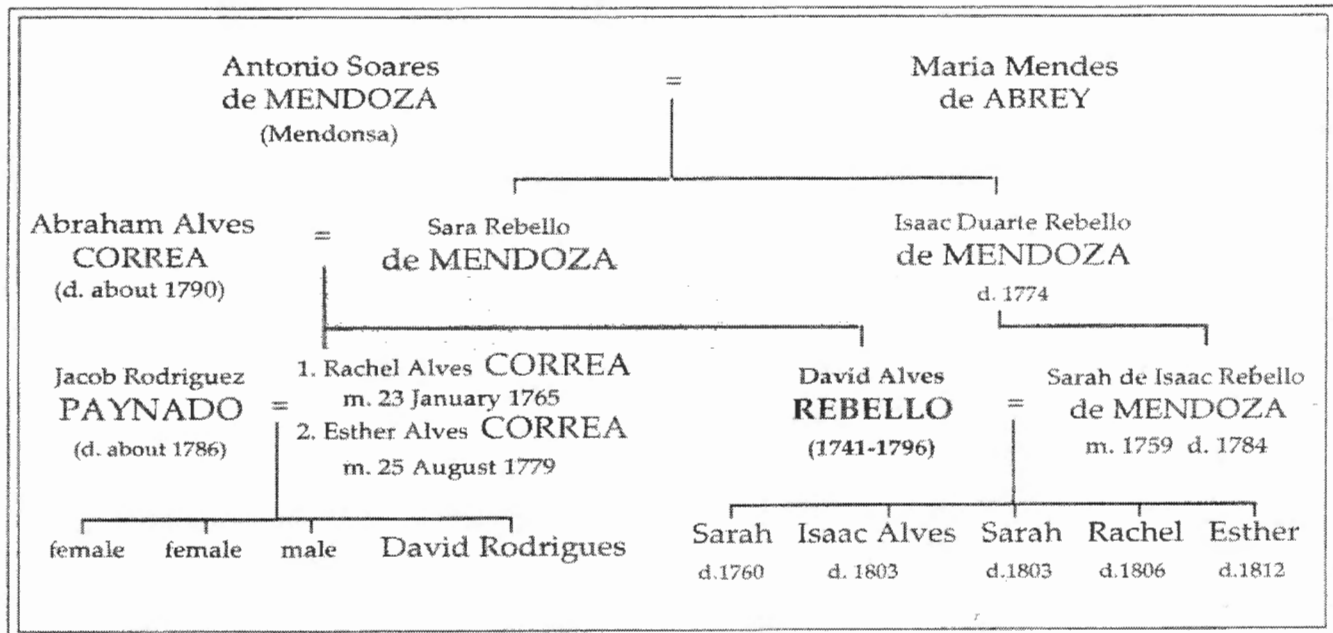
According to Jewitt²⁰ there were three versions of the SCS token of 1792. The obverse side had the inscription of the SCS with a cap of Liberty on a pole between branches of oak with PRO PATRIA on a label across the pole. One of the varieties showed Hackney Church on the reverse, illustrated in Robinson. The SCS was a radical movement demanding constitutional reform with about 2000 members.²¹ They met in groups of 10 and Robinson suggests that there was a branch of the society in Hackney with their own version of the SCS token. The SCS was founded in 1791 and faded out of existence in 1795. It had connections with other groups and Robinson describes a Hackney Constitutional Society Token of 1795. Joseph Priestley and Dr Richard Price were members.

Robinson makes a double mistake. He gives the date 'MDCXC' of the SCS token. In the Errata he corrects this to 'MDCCXC'. The correct version is 'MCCXC'.

In 1879 correspondence²² debated the meaning of the word 'scuppet', thought to be the implement illustrated on the reverse side of the 1795 token, underneath the initials DAR. R.T.Samuel, a coin expert and Hackney resident (who lived in Paradise Row, Paragon Road) gave the most authoritative answer.²³ He suggested that 'Rabello' used the scuppet to represent death, the instrument being used for digging and filling graves; the palm branch (also illustrated) represented immortality.

R.T.Samuel also wrote a series of detailed descriptions of tokens of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which appeared in the *Bazaar, Exchange and Mart*.²⁴ His description of the two Rebello pieces is the most comprehensive written, and subsequent authors seem to have taken their data from him.

R.C.Bell's descriptions of the Rebello coins was taken from Samuel. Bell did not agree that a scuppet is illustrated on the 1795 token but thought it more likely that the illustration is of an old-fashioned penknife in its case. He thinks that the 'palm' is really a quill that would have been sharpened by the penknife. He does not



The Rebello family tree. Abraham Alves Correa and Sarah Rebello de Mendoza were Marrano Jews. Married in Portugal, they 'remarried' in Bevis Marks in 1784 in order to receive full privileges as members of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.

give any explanation for this symbolism.²⁵

Robert Thompson believes that a ship's rudder is illustrated and not a scuppert and had been copied from a previous halfpenny token of 1788.²⁶ He does not give a reason for this but adds that Rebello's coin collection was sold after 1803 to Edward Roberts, Richard Miles and Marmaduke Trattle.

There is an alternative reason for the use of the scuppert which was probably an instrument used in building the new church of St John-at-Hackney. The palm branch may have represented fertility and thus increased the demand of the residents of Hackney for their new church. Rebello was a practising Jew who celebrated Succot, the festival of Tabernacles. At this time a palm branch, together with a citron, myrtle and willow branches are used in the synagogue and the home for religious custom. If indeed a palm branch is illustrated in the 1795 token the idea may have been taken from its use in the synagogue at Succot.

Last days and testament

Rebello's obituary²⁷ states; 'A paralytic affection, that, for the space of two years, by progressive strides, deprived him of his faculties, finally terminated his existence'. His complicated will was made in October 1794 and presumably he supervised the minting of his 1795 token. Although Rebello suffered from a chronic disabling neurological disease his rea-

soning and mental facility were left intact as evidenced by the codicil to his will dated 9 October 1794. There is a good possibility that he suffered from the 'shaking palsy' as described by James Parkinson.²⁸ Parkinson lived within walking distance of Clifton House, across the fields at Hoxton Square. He was the Physician to St Leonard's Hospital, Shoreditch and published his classic work on the shaking palsy in 1817. However, none of the six cases originally described in 1817 fit the description of Rebello. No record of inpatient care of Rebello has been found in the archives of the Royal London Hospital.

Both Rebello and Parkinson were amateur geologists and coin collectors. They could well have met each other through their common interests. The coin collection of James Parkinson was still in existence in the 1950s.²⁹ Unfortunately I have been unable to trace the coin collection of Parkinson. Florence H. Stevens, a great great granddaughter of James Parkinson, writes in March 1997 that nothing of the coin collection reached her branch of the family.

In his will, Rebello wrote: 'I desire that my body may be buried at least forty-eight hours after my decease'. Bearing in mind that Jewish religious law (Halacha) requires that a person be buried as soon as possible after death (indeed, in Israel funerals sometimes take place at night) this request by Rebello

needs explanation. There may be two reasons. It was common at this time for bodies to be stolen soon after burial for dissection in the anatomy schools. Delaying the funeral meant that the body would not be in the best condition for the students. The delay could also have been requested to ensure that death had actually taken place in view of the old fear of being buried alive, in 'suspended animation'.

David Alves Rebello and his family were buried in the main section of the Novo Cemetery of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, Mile End Road. A large part of the grounds have been built over to provide accommodation for Queen Mary College. A section from the latter half of the 19th century remains behind the University. Re-burial of remains was at Brentwood in Essex.

A picture of Rebello

What picture can we draw of David Alves Rebello? He was the son of a Marrano Jew, born in Portugal and married at the age of 18. Whilst a supporter of his synagogue and prepared to take on community office he was also ready to discuss his religion and argue in its favour with some of the foremost Christian theologians of his time. A cultured man, of good financial means, 'he was quite a gentleman in his manner, spoke sensibly but not fluently'³⁰ this probably referring to his Portuguese accent. He died leaving bequests to his family, his friends, to Jew and non-Jew and to his synagogue. Two hundred years later his tokens and their forgeries are held by a few lucky collectors. And some members of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation still benefit from his generosity.

Notes

1. VCH, X.
2. M. Brown, 'The Jews of Hackney before 1840', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, XXX (1987-1988) 71-87.
3. I. Watson, *Gentlemen in the building line* (1989).
4. B. Clarke, *Glimpses of Ancient Hackney* (1893) reprinted 1986.
5. Brown, n.2 above.
6. R. Simpson, *Memorials of St John at Hackney* (1882), 3, 148-149.
7. HAD ratebooks (1736-1811); J. Picciotto *Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History* (1875) ed. Finestein (1956) 220-221; A. M. Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England* (1951), 113-114; codicil to Will of David Alves Rebello, 9th October 1794.
8. Brown, n.2 above.
9. Personal correspondence with Miss M. Rodrigues-Pereira.
10. (e.g.) *Morning Chronicle*, 20th December 1781. R. Paley, *Justice in Eighteenth Century Hackney*, (1991) London Record Society, 28, ix-x, 51, 116.

11. As n. 9 above.
12. Picciotto, n. 7 above.
13. A. D. Orange, *Joseph Priestley* (1974), M. Gray, 'Joseph Priestley in Hackney', *Enlightenment and Dissent* (1983) 107-110; 'Joseph Priestley in Clapton 1791-1794', *East London Record* (1983) 32-38.
14. J. Fruchtman, 'Joseph Priestley and Early English Zionism', *Enlightenment and Dissent* (1983), 39-46.
15. J. Priestley, *A Discourse to the Supporters of the New College, Hackney* (1791) 33.
16. Theophilus Lindsey to William Tayleur at Shrewsbury 13 May 1788 (in the John Rylands Library, Manchester). I am grateful to Mike Gray for drawing my attention to this letter.
17. D. M. Friedenberg, *Jewish Medals from the Renaissance to the Fall of Napoleon; 1503-1815* (1970) 84-85, 140-141; W. Robinson, *History and Antiquities of the Parish of Hackney* (1842), I, 32-38; R. C. Bell *Tradesmen's Tickets and Private Tokens 1785-1819*, (1966) xi 81-82, 99-102.
18. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1796, 441.
19. On comparison of one of the 24 copper DAR 1/2 penny 1795 tokens (acquired in June 1997 by the author) with the Skidmore forgery, the craftsmanship of the Royal Mint diecaster, John Milton, becomes obvious. Brickwork is shown up on the old tower and the Heron family shield is clear, not blurred. The lettering on the reverse side has a clearer and more beautiful type. Without doubt the original is of a much superior quality.
20. L. Jewitt, 'The Traders' Tokens of Sheffield', *The Sheffield Miscellany* (1897).
21. J. Taylor, 'The Sheffield Constitutional Society (1791-1795)', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society*, 5 (1943).
22. *Notes and Queries*, 1879; 16th August, 128-129; 20th September, 235-236.
23. R. T. Samuel, *Notes and Queries*, 20th September 1879, 235; J. Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary* (1905) 293, 300.
24. R. T. Samuel, 'Provincial Copper Coins, or Tokens of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *The Bazaar, Exchange and Mart*, 9th January 1884, 33-34; 12th March 1884, 274-275.
25. Bell, n.17 above.
26. Personal correspondence. See also following article.
27. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1796, 441.
28. See C. Gardner-Thorpe, *James Parkinson 1755-1824*, containing a reprint of Parkinson's work of 1817; also personal correspondence.
29. Personal communication from Dr Gardner-Thorpe.
30. Lindsey, n. 16 above.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Robert Bell of Newcastle and Robert H. Thompson, South Tottenham, for advice about coins and tokens; Dr Christopher Gardner-Thorpe of Exeter, David Webb of the Bishopsgate Institute, Miss M. Rodrigues-Pereira of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation and Alan Ruston.

Note: Melvyn H. Brooks is a family physician, happily married and blessed with four children. He spent his early life in Hackney, London, and qualified in Sheffield where he met Roma within a few hours of arriving there. Dr. Brooks started collecting Hackney in 1960. His books, prints, maps, postcards, tokens and coins and other ephemera probably form one of the largest collections about the area in private hands. Hackney Judaica is of especial interest. David Alves Rebello lived within a fifteen minutes walk of Dr. Brooks but 154 years earlier. Amongst his treasures are several class lists (from the late 18th century) of Newcomes Academy. Two of the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence attended this school in Hackney. John Fisher

What I'm Reading

Tom Fredette

Our English Towns and Villages (an illustration from this book was used in a previous article by this writer) is a small book which, as the author H.R. Wilton Hall reminds us in his Preface "...is intended as a reader, not as a textbook to be worked up for examination purposes." The book was intended to be read, I suspect, by English grammar school students as a history of English life as it is revealed by one's surroundings. It bears a small imprint inside the cover: THE BOYS' FARM HOME, EAST BARNET, HERTS.

The volume is divided into 49 brief chapters which cover topics such as the earliest cave-dwellers, Saxon and Norman times, the development of towns, town government, schools, the poor, buildings, churches and more. It is not difficult to see how reading a small history such as this one could be helpful to a collector of British trade tokens - especially if the collector is not British! For that reason alone, this 198 page volume has something to say to the collector.

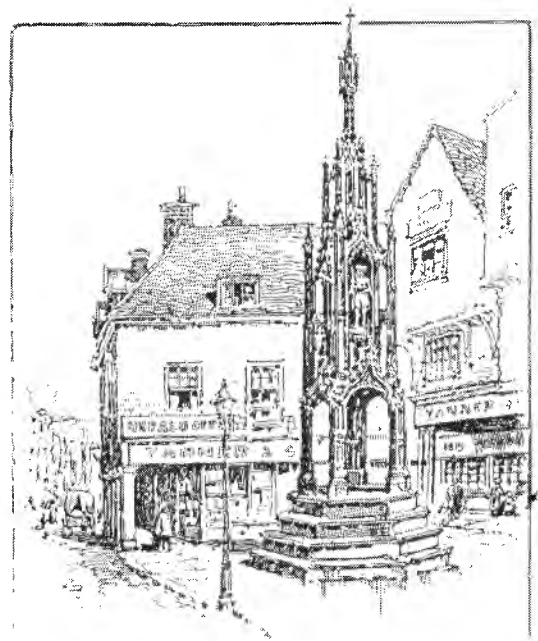
Of specific interest to those of us interested in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century period is what the author writes about the poor, blue coat boys, market crosses, castles, churches and ruins. He even devotes a chapter to wool. Chapter IX - "Tythings and Hundreds - Shires" appealed to this writer immediately.



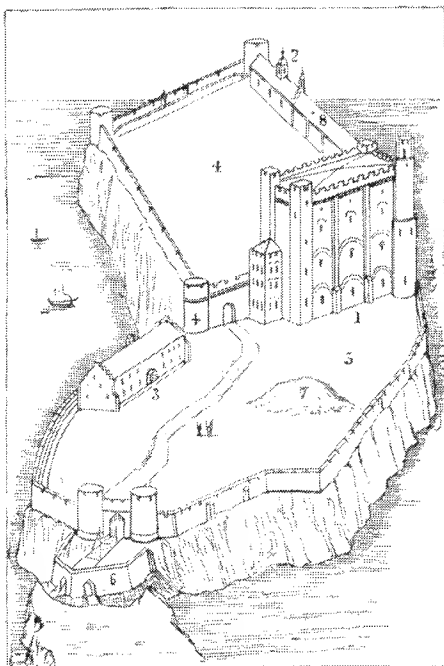
Photo. Valentine

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON: SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN'S MASTERPIECE (page 169)

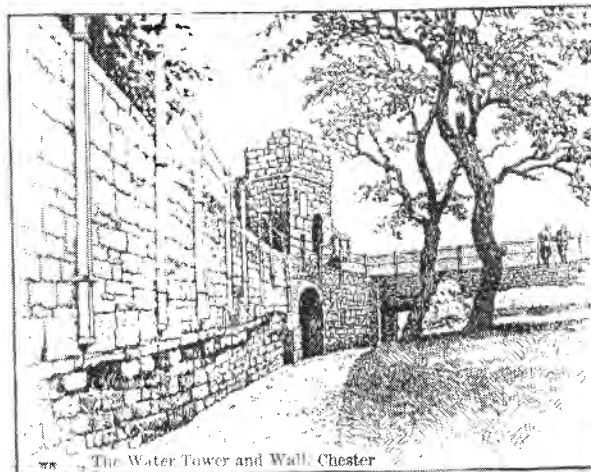
In doing research for the article "The Liberty of Havering atte-Bower and King Henry the Fourth" (Issue #29), this writer, unfamiliar with certain English customs, was faced with sorting out another meaning for the word "liberty." There was some help from a web site, of course, but essentially I made the best informed guess I could about a *liberty* and the relationship it had to the charter granted by King Edward IV. I was pleased to see that the chapter on "Tythings and Hundreds - Shires" confirmed my guesses and enlightened me further and has advanced my understanding of the backgrounds of a number of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century tokens.



Market Cross and portion of Shelter, Winchester



Norman Castle.—From a drawing in Grose's Military Antiquities.—1, The Donjon-keep. 2, Chapel. 3, Stables. 4, Inner Ballium. 5, Outer Ballium. 6, Barbican. 7, Mount, supposed to be the court-hill, or tribunal, and also the place where justice was executed. 8, Soldiers' Lodgings.



The Water Tower and Wall, Chester

This small volume also contains a number of "post card like" black and white illustrations of buildings and their construction styles which reminds the writer of the Kempson Series. Because the book was published prior to World War Two (I'm fairly sure of this) many of the illustrations may show the reader places and structures which no longer exist and show some, such as Saint Paul's and Canterbury Cathedral which still do. We can recall that the Kempson Series, in particular, shows us views of buildings which in many instances may no longer be part of the English skyline.

Conder tokens have been said to be relics of the past. As collectors and preservers we recognize this. In the Preface, Hall addresses this thought by noting that:

There are many relics and customs yet remaining in many places, which with a little care and attention to local circumstances, may be made helpful in teaching history, so that it shall be something more than a collection of names, dates, battles and lists of eminent persons.

This statement is still true. Owning, reading and using an unexpected find such as *Our English Towns and Villages* can be one more resource in the unending quest collectors have to find out more about the tokens we collect.

The Book:

Hall, H. R., Wilton, *Our English Towns and Villages*,
Blackie & Son Limited, 198 pp.



Photo. Valentine

CASTLE AND BUTTER MARKET, DUNSTER, SOMERSETSHIRE (page 124)

Editor's note: Tom will be glad to loan this book to any CTCC member on request

William Booth the Forger Editor's Preface

This article was sent in by Frank Gorsler in a most unusual format and circumstances. Frank tells the story:

Back in 1986 I bought a 19th century token (1900 copy of the William Booth penny W-956) in a Spink auction. It was from the collections of WJ Davis and Sykes. Along with it came an actual sheet torn out of the Birmingham Weekly Post dated November 12, 1932. It contained a full-page article (tiny font, about 12 by 16 inches) on Booth, the forger. I know Withers has a few paragraph summary in his book but this goes into much more detail. I..... wondered whether it might be of interest to our readers. If so, I could copy it and send it to you. What do you think?

Frank included an image of his Booth penny token:

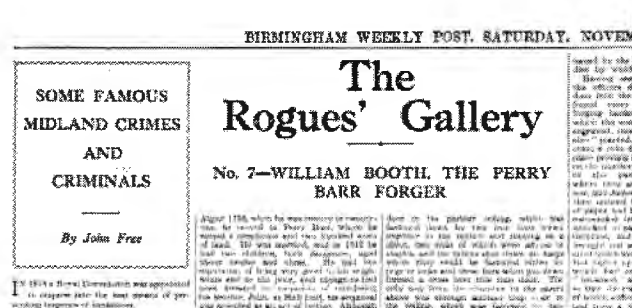
(41) Staffordshire/Perry Bar D-91, W-956 (R)



William Booth (copy circa 1900)

No. 1324-Ex Spink Sale 51, WJ Davis, Sykes-1986

The article tells a fascinating story but had to be completely reformatted to be compatible with the Journal. The original format was a yellowed newspaper page.



The Handsworth Historical Society kindly provided images of the farmhouse and a portrait of Booth to illustrate the reformatted article. Enjoy the story!

BIRMINGHAM WEEKLY POST, SAT. NOV 12, 1932

**THE
ROGUE'S GALLERY**

**No. 7 – WILLIAM BOOTH, THE PERRY
BARR FORGER**

**SOME FAMOUS
MIDLAND CRIMES
AND
CRIMINALS**

.....
By John Free

In 1818 a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the best means of preventing forgeries of banknotes.

“Aria’s Gazette,” commenting upon the subject, declared at the time:

“The temptation afforded by the comparative ease with which notes of the bank may be imitated has indeed proved a heavy affliction, and highly injurious to the character of Birmingham – very few of the Assizes for the country having for many years passed without consigning some of its inhabitants, convicted of engaging in the execution or uttering of forgeries, to a long term of imprisonment, transportation, or death. The recently concluded assize furnishes a dreadful but remarkable illustration of this fact. No town in the kingdom will therefore have greater reason to hail with pleasure the adoption of any plan by which forgeries of bank paper may be, if not entirely prevented, at any rate placed above the execution, as at present, of almost the lowest class of engravers.”

A Coin Factory

Only six years before had been hanged at Stafford William Booth, of Perry Barr, the most notorious of all forgers. The offense for which he was condemned to death was for forging a silver token issued by the Bank of England for one dollar, or five shillings, but this was, of course, only one of his many crimes. While most forgers and coiners carried on their operations on a small scale, Booth’s farm at Perry Barr was a factory where banknotes were counterfeited by the thousand, and spurious coins in an almost corresponding degree. After his conviction, it was popularly supposed that he had amassed half a million pounds by his forgeries, and in digging up the fields about his farm, banknotes to the value of thirty thousand pounds, together with the plates for printing them, were discovered. So, too, they found a large number of spurious coins, or tokens, together with the dies from which they were struck.

The case will be all the clearer for some notes on the currency of the time.

Banknotes were issued in those days not only by the Bank of England, but also by all the hundreds of small private banks which abounded throughout the country. Owing to the scarcity of silver coins, it was the custom to issue notes of very low denominations, even for a quarter of a guinea, or five shillings and threepence.

During the reign of King George the Third, who ascended the throne in 1760, there was a great scarcity of copper and silver coins. Halfpennies and farthings had been issued from 1770 to 1775, and again in 1790, while the twopenny pieces and pennies that were minted by Boulton at Soho were issued in 1797. But these did not suffice for small change, and a large number of municipalities like Coventry, and ironmasters like Wilkinson, struck "tokens" to serve that purpose. It is therefore quite probable that Booth told the metal-rollers who supplied him that he was engaged in making the "tokens" which would of itself have been no offense. Otherwise, it seems incredible that quantities of sheet metal should have been sold to a farmer without exciting suspicion.

Penny Tokens

For over fifty years no silver money had been coined at the Royal Mint, with the exception of an issue of shillings and sixpences in 1787. Owing to the scarcity of silver coins, in 1804 the Bank of England received authority to mint silver tokens called dollars, at the value of five shillings, and in 1811 it was given the further power to issue other silver tokens to the value of three shillings and one shilling and sixpence. It was these tokens which Booth counterfeited, and not the coin of the realm, which during that reign had been issued only in gold, ranging from the guinea to the quarter-guinea, valued at five shillings and threepence, of which a small quantity had been issued in one year only, 1762. It must be supposed that in counterfeiting the tokens of the Bank of England, Booth thought he was liable only to the penalty of transportation. The penalty for imitating the coin of the realm was death.

According to the evidence at the trial, he told John Ingleby, one of the men whom he employed to help him in making the five-shilling pieces, to say that they were employed in making "penny tokens." In the several accounts of the crime, this point is entirely ignored, although one of them reproduced a token that he himself had issued, inscribed "William Booth. One Penny. Perry Barr."

William Booth was the son of a farmer at Hall Green, near Woottan Wawen, and was brought up in his father's calling. About 1799, when he was twenty or twenty-one, he moved to Perry Barr, where he rented a farmhouse and two hundred acres of land. He was married, and in 1812 he had two children, both daughters, aged about twelve and three. He had the reputation of being very good to his neighbors and to the poor, and though he had been arrested on suspicion of murdering his brother, John, at Hall End, his acquittal was accepted as an act of justice. Although many were wise after the event, it does not appear that there was any reason for associating his name with criminal enterprises until a paragraph appeared in "The Staffordshire Advertiser" of February 15, 1812:

"At Walsall a few days since was apprehended through the vigilance of that active Constable, Mr. T. Pearce, Job Jones, servant to Mr. Booth, farmer of Perry Barr, charged with uttering to Mr. Donnan, saddler, Walsall aforesaid, a forged two pound Bank of England Note. In his possession were found also forty-seven two pound Bank of England Notes, uncommonly well executed. He had been committed by Samuel Willis, Esq., the mayor for the Borough and Foreign of Walsall, to the county gaol, for trial at the ensuing assizes."

About this arrest there are several curious circumstances. It appears that Job Jones was sentenced at the Assizes to transportation for fourteen years—all penal

settlements were then, of course, overseas in the colonies, but he was tried separately from Booth and his accomplices. So far as I can discover, no mention was made of him during this trial, and a whole month elapsed before the constables of Birmingham obtained a warrant to search the house at Perry Barr. I propose to follow the account of the trial as given in a contemporary pamphlet, "The Trial of William Booth, who was tried at Stafford, Firday, July 31, 1812, for Forgery and Money-Making."

Five Charges

On Friday, July 31, 1812, William Booth was tried for forging a one pound note purporting to be a promissory note of the Bank of England.

On the same day he was tried with George Scot for making paper with words "Bank of England" thereon and for having in their possession and using mould for that purpose.

On Saturday, August 1, William Booth and Elizabeth Chidlow were tried for using plates for making promissory notes in imitation of Bank of England notes, and for having such bank notes in their possession. On the same day William Booth and George Scot were tried for coining five-shilling pieces. The indictment charged the prisoners with coining "a piece of coin called a dollar, having an impression on the obverse side of his Majesty's head, and the words, "Georgius III, Dei Gratia Rex," and on the reverse a figure of Britannia, and the words, "Five Shillings, Dollar Bank of England, 1804." On the same morning William Booth, John Yates the elder, John Yates the younger, James Yates, John Barrows and George Scot were tried for coining three shilling bank tokens.

Booth himself was not an engraver, nor a diesinker, and I am inclined to think that this part of the forgery was undertaken by John Scot, who was a Scotsman, while the rest of the accused appear to have been people who were previously engaged in work about the farm. At the trial they were all described as members of the prisoner's "family," or household, while John Scot was supposed to be what we should now call a "paying guest," or lodger. The others were farm servants, and besides them there were also two brothers, Richard and John Ingleley, who turned King's evidence, and appeared at the trial as the chief witnesses for the prosecution.

The Fortified Farm

Booth lived in "An old farm at Perry Barr, in the parish of Handsworth, in the county of Stafford," at a considerable distance from any other dwelling.

The lonely situation of Booth's house was "well adapted for carrying on a business which required privacy," and he took great precautions to prevent that privacy from being disturbed. On entering the house was a passage or lobby, communicating both with the kitchen and the parlour, but the access to the parlour

was interrupted by a series of three strong doors. There was no other communication on the ground floor with that parlour but through these doors.

Over the parlour there was a chamber, and over that chamber a garret. When Booth had first entered into his tenancy a staircase led out of the passage on the ground floor to these two upper rooms, but the communication between the staircase and those rooms was stopped, the entrance or doorway in both chamber and garret being bricked up. The only way to get into the chamber was through a trap door in the parlour ceiling, which was fastened down by two iron bars joined together in the middle and moving on a pivot, two ends of which were affixed in staples, and the others shut down on hasps where they could be fastened either by pegs or locks and these bars when put down formed a cross over this trap door. The only way from the chamber to the garret above was through another trap door in the ceiling, which was fastened by two bars laid over it transversely, and fastened in a similar manner by staples and hasps. When Booth and his household wanted to enter the upper rooms through the trapdoor, they used moveable ladders which were so light that they could easily be drawn after them.



Booth's Farm
Handsworth Historical Society

Soldiers and Constables

It is not clear why the constables of Birmingham became concerned in the case, for Perry Barr was outside their boundary. But Joseph Chirm, the headborough – a kind of chief constable -- obtained a search warrant from the magistrates on the suspicion that Booth's farm contained all the materials and implements used in coining and forgery, and also that it was a place for the receipt of stolen goods – a charge of which no more was heard. Having heard that the house was fortified and barricaded, the constables swore in a number of special

constables for the occasion, and set out on March 16, together with a sergeant and a party of six dragoons. They feared that there might be armed resistance. On their way they called at the Boar's Head, now the Scott Arms, at Perry Barr.

While they were drinking they were seen by Dorothy Ingleley, the wife of John Ingleley, one of Booth's servants. She suspected their errand, and went as quickly as she could by a footpath over the fields to the farm, while the mounted party followed the high road. She arrived before them, and told what she had seen to Mrs. Chidlow, who went to the parlour door, and knocked. Booth came to it and asked, "good woman, what bother brings you here?" "The runners are coming," she replied. "It is a damned lie; they durst not," retorted Booth. But, going back into the locked trunk, told him that the things in it were finished with, and he must go and plant it. "The servant went into the field and dug a hole to bury it, while Booth returned to the parlour with Mrs. Chidlow and bolted the three doors.

Consequently, instead of finding Booth with the plates for forgery in his possession and obtaining an easy admittance, the constables found the house bolted and secured against them, and access to the parlour by the barred windows was impossible. They saw that the window of the chamber on the second story was barred in the same way, and obtaining a ladder they ascended it to the garret. As Chillingworth, the officer who was leading the way, passed the chamber window he saw Booth in the middle of the room, carrying small pieces of paper that looked like banknotes, and putting them on the fire. Chillingworth called out to Booth and asked him to let him in. Booth replied he would presently, on which the officer, breaking the glass, again called out to him, telling him he was dropping notes. The officer then ascended to the garret window, and by using a considerable amount of force got in there, and when he had obtained entrance he was soon followed by others. Chillingworth jumped down the trap into the chamber, and Booth at the same time jumped into the parlour beneath, where he was arrested.

Having seen what was in the garret, the officers descended through the trapdoor into the chamber beneath, and they found every implement necessary for forging banknotes, except the plates on which the words printed on the notes were engraved, those plates (like the dies) being also "planted." They found there charcoal, coke, a coke fire, a rolling press, or copperplate printing press, and a stamp for putting on the number of the note. Then descending to the parlour, they found Booth, whom they arrested with Elizabeth Chidlow, and James Yates. While in the chamber they noticed that a considerable quantity of paper had been destroyed by fire. They reascended into the chamber, and having knocked in part of the chimney above the fireplace, and put in their hands, they brought out several burnt pieces of paper, all of which were charred beyond recognition. But higher up the chimney they found one which had only been partly burned, or "browned" as Chillingworth described it, so that the reading was quite decipherable, of which sufficient remained to show that it had been a Bank of England promissory note, or rather an imitation one.

The officers then searched other parts of the house, and on going to a room over the dairy, then used as a lumber room, and leading to another called the granary, they found the door locked. Having forced it open they found there every material necessary for fabricating bank paper upon a beam at some height and so

situated that it could not be seen unless by a tall person standing on a chair or otherwise raised. They also found a mould with wire fastened to it, and the words "One" near the top, and "Bank of England" near the bottom, worked in wire, calculated for making the appearance of bank paper, "for these wires gave the lines called water marks, in the waved manner in which they are made in real bank notes, and the words so appeared in the paper similar to the same words in what are called the water-marks in genuine notes."

The most interesting evidence was that by the Ingeleys, who appeared as witnesses for the prosecution. John, the younger brother, had only been in Booth's employ for three months, having been engaged by him at Christmas at work in the barns, and not taken into the house till about a fortnight before Booth's arrest. At the trial he testified that on the Tuesday before his arrest, Booth had tumbled down the trapdoor into the parlour, hurting him, and while he was lying in bed, he gave to Ingeley two copper plates, directing him to hide them. He wrapped them up in a cloth and buried them in a ditch; and later the same day he was again employed to plant a single plate, which he did in the same manner. Mrs. Booth also gave him plates when Booth was not present, which he hid in the thatch of a wheat rick.

The Women Assist

Richard Ingeley's evidence showed that both Mrs. Booth and Mrs. Chidlow assisted Booth in the printing of the banknotes. He deposed that he had worked for Booth for several years. About a fortnight before his arrest Booth gave him a plate wrapped in paper and told him to take it and plant it; he dug a hole and buried it in the wheat field adjoining the rickyard. On the Friday after Booth's arrest Ingeley showed Chillingworth where he had "planted" it.

When Ingeley was shown one of the punches with figures in-cut on ivory, for the purpose of stamping the numbers on the notes, he said that he had seen Booth using such things in the room over the parlour upon papers like notes, on which there was already printing; they made marks on the paper when so used. There were rollers in the chamber which he had seen Mrs. Booth and Mrs. Chidlow use several times when Booth was in the room. They had boards, cloths, large plates, small plates, and papers. The copper plates on which the words on the one pound notes were engraved were then shown to Ingeley; he had seen those plates used, they were known as the "large plates," with the date upon them. He said he had also seen the "small plates" used, those they called "lines." First they used the large plates, putting paper upon them, and then placing them between cloths and boards, and then through the rollers. They they used the letter and figures on the Thursday night before his arrest, and the narrow plates were used between two and three o'clock that same afternoon. Mrs. Booth and Mrs. Chidlow were at work with the "lines" at the same time that Booth was at work with the punch.

Accused of Murder

Booth was condemned to death, and all his accomplices to transportation. After his condemnation, all sorts of accusations were made against him, mostly in gossip. Another account of his trial and his career is very rare; I have seen only a single copy of it, which formerly belonged to Sir Benjamin Stone, and it is itself not an original printed account but a manuscript copy made for him. The title page reads:

“The trial of William Booth, of Perry Barr, for forgery at Staffordshire Assizes, 1812, with the trial of the said William Booth charged with the willful murder of his brother John Booth at Warwickshire Assizes, 1808, with some interesting particulars of his life, character, and behavior at the place of execution. Stafford. Printed by J. Drewery. Price 8d.”

From this it appears that Booth and his brother were on bad terms, and on February 19, 1808, when William was on a visit in the district of Wootton Waven, John was found in a stable with severe wounds in his head. The prosecution alleged that these were caused by a spade, which was found by him with blood upon it, but the defense alleged that they were caused by kicks from a vicious horse which was in the stable, and that the blood had fallen there from the hands of the labourer who found John Booth lying there, and cleared his mouth of blood to enable him to breathe. At the trial at Warwick Assizes on April 8 the Judge summed up very strongly against conviction, emphasizing the legal axiom that it is better for twenty men who are guilty to escape than for one man who is innocent to be hanged. William Booth's alibi was accepted and he was acquitted, but all sorts of fantastic crimes were attributed to him. According to the same pamphlet: “The most extraordinary circumstance which has yet been narrated and which stands at present uncontradicted is that a person of the name of Moses Hall, after receiving a considerable sum of money, accompanied Booth to his house at Perry Barr, and was never afterwards heard of. A female connected with the said Moses Hall also went to Booth's house to enquire for him, and she also was never after seen or heard of. A part of their clothes was found in Booth's premises, as was also a halter with a noose, and which had apparently been used for the purpose of hanging or strangling.”

Twice Hanged

The story of any public execution is almost incredible in these days but that of Booth was carried out, according to the custom of the time, on the gallows erected before Stafford Gaol, in the presence of thousands of spectators who crowded the square. Having received the Holy Sacrament, in the condemned hold, where he was chained to the wall, the fetters were struck off his arms and legs, and he was strongly pinioned, by binding his arms to his sides. Then began the melancholy procession, in which he was attended by the chaplain, who carried his Prayer Book and was dressed in his full canonicals. Having said farewell to the clergyman he turned his back on the multitude who had assembled for his execution. It was the custom for the prisoner to make the signal that he was prepared for his fate, and thus occurred the frightful accident by which he was

“twice hanged.” It is best told in the words of the contemporary account issued by Drewery, of Stafford:

“The unfortunate culprit having been conducted to the platform, some time was passed in prayer, after which the halter was affixed to his neck and the cap drawn over his face. On a signal given by himself that he was ready to meet his fate the platform suddenly dropped, when, awful to relate, the rope, not being properly fastened to the fatal tree, slipped off and the poor malefactor fell to the floor, a distance of eight or ten feet. Notwithstanding the height of his fall, his great weight, and the defenseless situation in which a man whose arms are pinioned is placed, he did not appear to be bruised. He lay for a few moments apparently stunned and insensible, and on recovering his senses did not utter the least murmur or complaint, but resumed with additional fervor his petitions to the Throne of Grace, enquiring with much solicitude for the worthy clergyman already alluded to, and who with great promptitude again attended him.

“A full quarter of an hour elapsed before the drop was again prepared, when he was submitted once more to his fate with a resignation which seemed to increase with his protracted sufferings. In the hurry and confusion occasioned even in the mind of such a personage as Jack Ketch, by the distressing accident which had happened, the drop, which had fallen in the first instance with the utmost facility, met with some impeachment in the general confusion, and the unhappy Booth gave three signals by dropping his handkerchief before he was launched into Eternity.”



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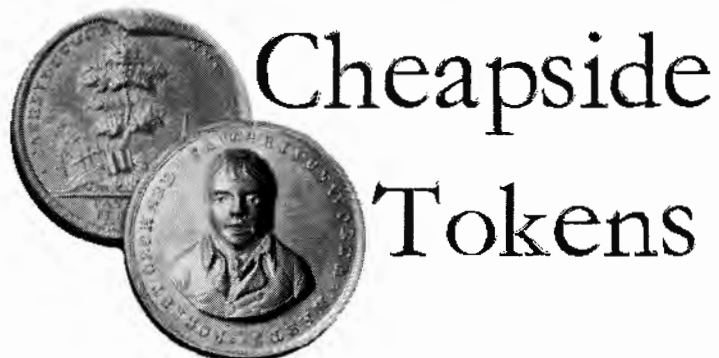
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